MANAGEMENT PLAN

November, 1996

for Skihist Ecological Reserve

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
BC Parks Department

Skihist
Ecological Reserve

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared by
BC Parks Kamloops Area Pilot Project Team
for Thompson River District
Kamloops, B.C.

BC Parks

105-03601/

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BC Parks Kamloops, BC

APPROVALS

Kamloops Area Management Planning Pilot Project
Binder Approvals Page

Forward

This binder contains 16 management plans developed under the Kamloops Area Management Planning Pilot Project. This project began in 1994 to develop, implement and evaluate a systems approach to management planning. The project concluded in October, 1996. The management plans contained in this binder provide long-term direction for a group of 10 Class A parks, five ecological reserves and one recreation area. The intention is to review this binder and the plans contained here at regular intervals. Plan vision statements and objectives will not change extensively over time. Management actions, however, will change as priorities, funding and support resources come available.

- ☐ Coldwater River Park
- ☐ Goldpan Park
- ☐ Juniper Beach Park
- ☐ Lac Le Jeune Park
- ☐ Marble Canyon Park
- ☐ McConnell Lake Park
- ☐ McQueen Creek Eco. Res.
- ☐ Monck Park
- ☐ Paul Lake Park
- ☑ Skihist Eco. Res.
- ☐ Skihist Park
- ☐ Skwaha Lake Eco. Res
- ☐ Soap Lake Eco. Res.
- ☐ Steelhead Park
- ☐ Tranquille Eco. Res.
- ☐ Walloper Lake

Approved by:

District Manager
Thompson River District
BC Parks Department

Assistant Deputy Minister
Park Management Committee
BC Parks Department

Skihist Ecological Reserve Management Plan

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I. Introduction

As outlined in the Ecological Reserve Act of 1971, ecological reserves are set aside for the following purposes:

- Scientific research and educational use
- Representation of natural ecosystems
- Study of recovery processes after modification by man
- Protection of rare and endangered native plants and animals in their natural habitat
- Protection of other unique and rare botanical, zoological or geological phenomena.

Management of ecological reserves is therefore concerned primarily with strict protection of the resources themselves and with the provision of those research and educational opportunities which will not harm or diminish these resources.

Recreation and tourism are not supported in ecological reserves, although public access for non-consumptive, observational activities is tolerated, provided no significant resource impact results from it.

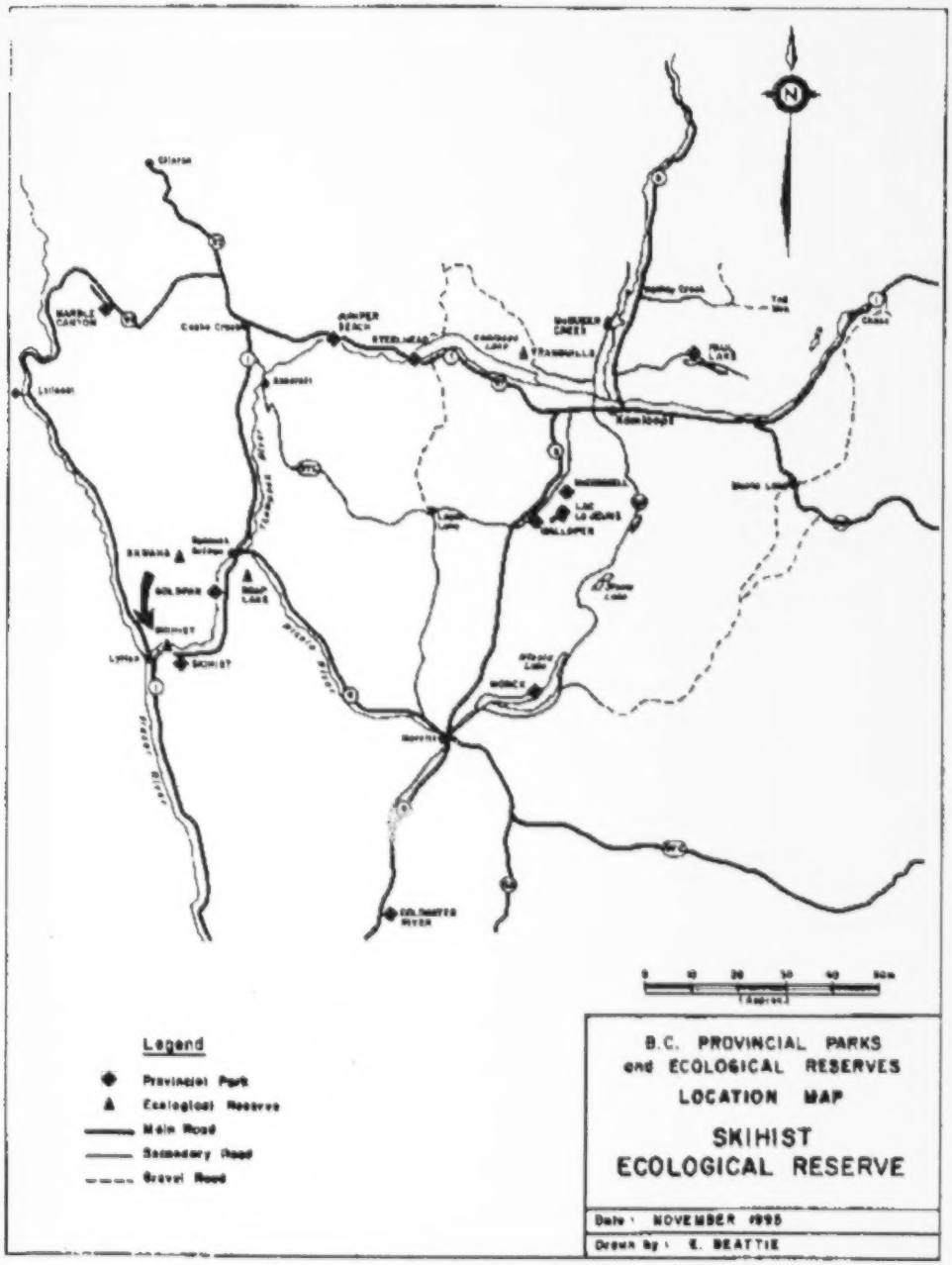
Purpose of the Management Plan

This management plan states the role of the ecological reserve in the provincial system, the long-term vision for the reserve and the management objectives and actions to achieve this vision. The ecological reserve role and objectives as stated in this plan cannot be contravened in meaning or intent without consultation with the public and approval by the district manager and BC Parks Management Committee (PMC). The five year business plan is subject to annual review and adjustments.

II. Background Summary

Natural Features

- Reserve size 36 ha; located in a narrow strip of land between the Thompson River and the CP Railway.
- Special 'features' of reserve: Land apparently never subject to cattle grazing due to the barrier formed by the railway line
- Representative features of reserve: Typical vegetation of the Very Dry Hot variant of the Ponderosa Pine Biogeoclimatic Zone (PPxh2). Widely spaced Ponderosa pines are combined with grassland species, most dominant among them bluebunch wheatgrass.
- Attractive spring flora in the reserve includes balsamroot, yellowbells, sage buttercup, shooting star and delphinium.
- The reserve is located on a moderately sloping bench of glacial deposits, with a sharp dropoff towards the river. In its western part this bench is dissected by several steep erosion gullies. Due to the predominantly steep banks there are only two access points to the river from the northwest and central portions of the reserve.


Legend
Provincial Park
Ecological Reserve
Main Road
Secondary Road
Gravel Road
B.C. PROVINCIAL PARKS
and ECOLOGICAL RESERVES
LOCATION MAP
SKIHIST
ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
Date : NOVEMBER 1995
Drawn by : E. BEATTIE

2

Prehistoric Features

- Archaeological site EbRj-151 is located above the river on the bench and consists of six house depressions ("keekwillie holes") and numerous cache pits.

Early History

- Gold placer mining on the river banks, accessed through present reserve.
- Mineral claims over the area up to 1976.
- "Forest Industrial Reserve" prior to 1970; however never used for industrial purposes.

Ecological Reserve History

- Applied for in 1971 and established as reserve in 1978 by order-in-council # 1729.

Management Issues

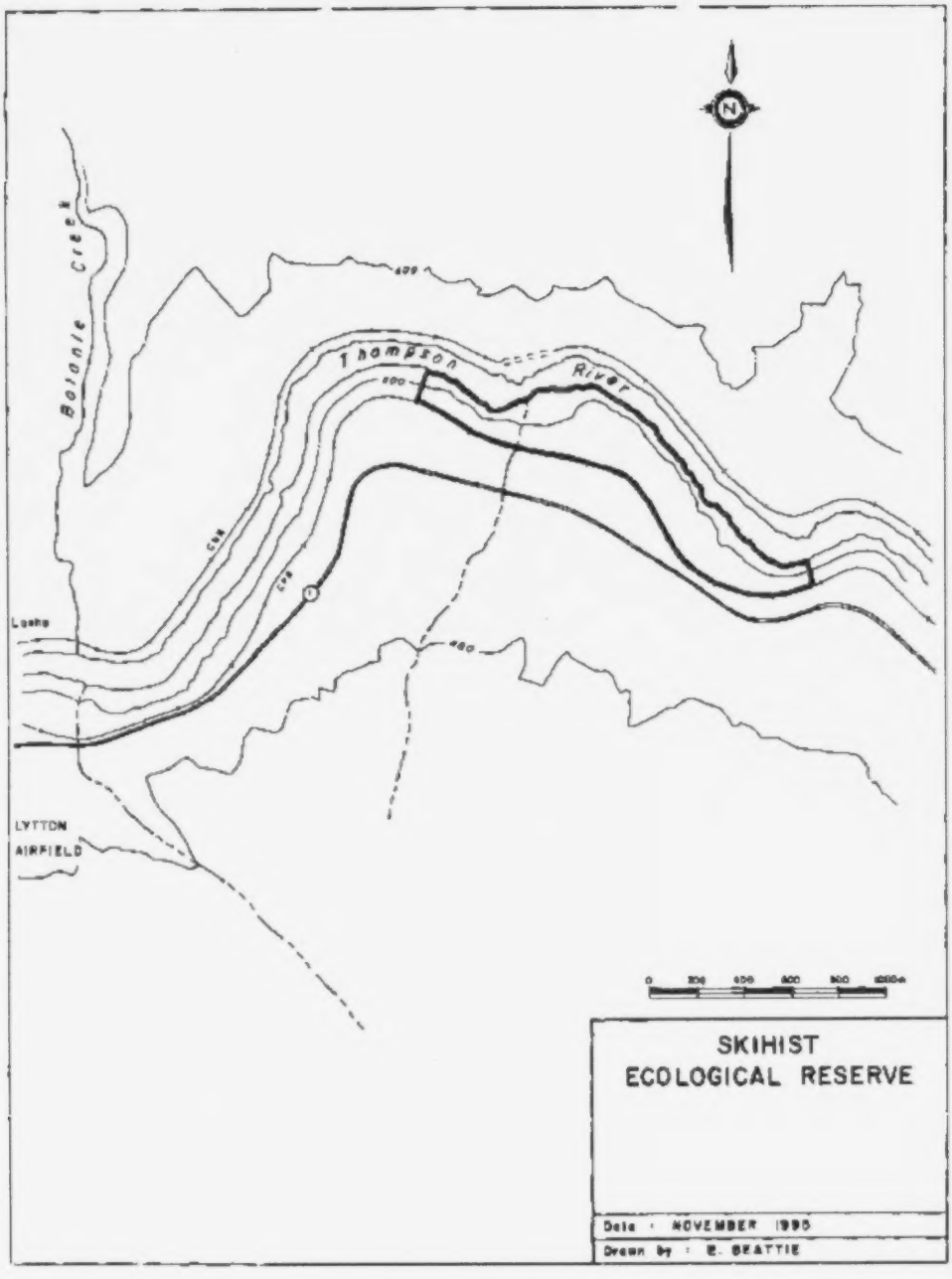
- Disturbance of archaeological site: Illegal digging and trenching in 1983 and again in 1986
- Recreational/Tourism: Casual recreational use of the reserve has increased in recent years. Foot traffic has led to new trails into reserve from the south and up to archaeological site from the river.
- Fires: The long frontage with the railway has led to numerous fires in the past, keeping shrub and tree regeneration out. However, there are now new pockets of young conifer growth which may in time result in dangerous fuel accumulations and possible succession to a Douglas-fir forest.
- Weeds: Chemical knapweed control by MoF was deemed necessary on adjacent land south of reserve. So far, knapweed, common toadflax, (baby's breath?,) and milkweed are restricted to a strip along the railway.
- Litter problem along railway: Cooperation from railway company sought and received.
- Ecological Reserve signs removed on occasions.

Research and Educational Use

- Little research use. Sporadic additions to biological inventory by staff and wardens; Longer-term study into plant litter decomposition started in 1992.

III. Role and Long-Term Vision

The role of this reserve is as a strictly protected, small benchmark area, valued for the undisturbed state of its forest/grassland ecosystem. The reserve is unique within the Ponderosa Pine Zone in being free from the pervasive long-term impact of cattle grazing and the attendant invasion by introduced species. As such it offers itself as a scientific benchmark and educational demonstration area against which altered ecosystems in the same biogeoclimatic variant can be measured.


N
Botanie Creek
Thompson River
400
400
400
CN
CN
1
Lusha
LYTTON
AIRFIELD
0 200 400 600 800 1000m
SKIHIST
ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
Date : NOVEMBER 1995
Drawn by : E. BEATTIE

The long-term vision is that of an island of naturalness within a largely altered surrounding ecosystem. Staff and warden vigilance will prevent ecological damage from increasing recreational use.

IV. Management Objectives and Actions

Access and Recreation

Objective: To halt gradually increasing and precedent-setting recreational and tourist use of the reserve.

Actions: Clarify in BC Lands referrals and through on-site signing that recreational use is unacceptable in the reserve as it will lead to long-term damage.

Fire

Objective: Maintain a near-natural structure of the Ponderosa pine community.

Action: Monitor in-growth under present tree cover and use controlled burns before dangerous fuel loads accumulate. (Keep in mind weed hazard on burnt sites and need for regeneration of stand.)

Introduced Plant Species

Objective: To keep the reserve free from weedy introduced plants.

Action: Monitor spread of weedy species into the reserve, especially along railway line, on fresh burns, and along active foot trails. If control becomes necessary, only manual and biological methods should be applied.

Research and Education

Objective: Provide opportunities and support for non-consumptive/non-destructive research in the reserve.

Action: Continue ongoing research and baseline inventory. Entertain on a permit basis low-intensity educational use if requested.

APPENDIX A 5 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

Skihist Ecological Reserve

Goal:	Protect archaeological values.
Action:	Monitor for unauthorized activities.
Goal:	Stop encroachment of noxious weeds from railroad right-of-way.
Action:	Implement a noxious weed program in cooperation with CP Rail and the TNRD (Thompson Nicola Regional District)
Goal:	Identify reserve boundaries and inform public about role of reserve within the Provincial Park system.
Action:	Install new signage.
Goal:	Identify usage of reserve by First Nation peoples.
Action:	In cooperation with Lytton Band, identify areas of cultural significance.
Goal:	Protect/enhance ecological reserve values through fire management.
Action:	Develop a fire management strategy.